WASHTENAW COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY - Founded December 17, 1857 MARCH 1992

WASHTENAW IMPRESSIONS

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

FUND RAISING GALA, 'COUNTY GOES COUNTRY' TO BE HELD AT BOB LYONS' OLD-TIME COUNTRY STORE

Mark your calendar! Pull out your checkbooks! Get ready to put on your party clothes! Plan to have a **GALA** time -- and help raise additional funds needed to continue finishing the restoration of the **Museum on Main Street**.

You are invited to join us when the **"County Goes Country"** on Friday evening, April 24th, at the Country Store owned by Bob Lyons, located at the northeast corner of Morgan and Carpenter Roads. If you have not yet had the opportunity to "party" at Bob Lyon's Country Store you will be amazed by the wonderful collection of antique artifacts he has gathered and has on display.

There are shelves of ancient cast iron toys; there are displays representative of drug store, general store, hardware store, and many unusual items no longer a part of our current lifestyle.

During the evening you will enjoy refreshments from the Moveable Feast, have the opportunity to bid on pairs of

tickets to the UM/Notre Dame away game, the UM/MSU home game, and the UM/OSU away game.

Our committee is working to gather "service" donations that will also be auctioned, such as: Susan Wineberg will research the history of your house/property; Mary and George Campbell will also research a piece of Pittsfield Township property; Reeva Cranor has fabricated a charming beaded evening top from a MoMS black T-shirt; and

Continued on page 6.

KAREN'S KOLUMN

'MOMS' WEARING NEW CEDAR SHINGLE ROOF; THOUGHTS TURN TO FENCES, HISTORY BY TELEVIDEO, EXHIBITS

You must see the new beautiful cedar shingle roof that is now finished on the MUSEUM ON MAIN STREET! Judging by the number of people who have commented to me about how nice it looks, it has not gone unnoticed by the community.

Photo by Quinn Evans Architects

New roof going on Museum (To Be) On Main Street

The museum is now protected with a secure roof that is properly flashed and supported by an adequate roof structure.

Next we will turn our attention to exterior details. We still need to repair some siding, window and door trim before the house will be ready for a coat of paint.

Gary Cooper from Quinn Evans/Architects has come up with some very exciting plans for the fences, porch railings and signage that will add a lot to our corner.

Thelma Graves has been instrumen-

Continued on page 6.

HISTORY OF ST. JOSEPH HOSPITAL TO BE TOLD SUNDAY, MARCH 15

A recently produced video about the history of St. Joseph Hospital will be shown at the WCHS meeting at 2 p.m. Sunday, March 15, in the Education Building of the Catherine McAuley Health Center at 5301 East Huron River Drive.

Sister Madeline Sage, coordinator of archives, will introduce the 30-minute video entitled "The CMHC Story: From House to Health Service" and answer questions afterward.

Tom Nanzig, archivist, will say a few words about their efforts to develop a comprehensive archive for the institution.

The now sprawling complex started out as St. Joseph's Mercy Hospital in a house in Ann Arbor.

The Education Building is at the west end of the complex and there is free parking nearby. Coffee will be served.

READERS COLLECT 43% OF POINTS FOR VCR

Readers have sent in a total of 7,113 points or 43 percent of the 16,509 points needed to earn a video cassette recorder for WCHS by collecting points when they eat at Knapp's Restaurants.

Anyone who eats at any Knapp's Restaurant can get a yellow point slip from the cashier each time with one point for each dollar spent.

Please keep collecting points and give or send to: Alice Ziegler, 537 Riverview Drive, Ann Arbor, MI 48104. Information: 663-8826.

DUES PAID FOR 1992? CHECK ADDRESS LABEL

Readers, please check your address label. If it does not say "dues paid 1992", "life member", or "complimentary" we regret that we shall not be able to continue sending *The Impressions*.

We hope you will want to continue to receive it and we are enclosing a return envelope for your convenience.

RAILROAD DEPOT ONCE GATEWAY TO THE WORLD

A hundred years ago the local railroad depot was the community's gateway to the world. Now it may serve another kind of community focus.

A good example of the latter, the Chelsea railroad depot, restored as a community center and small museum, was the setting for Sam Breck's February talk to WCHS on "The Railroad Depot, Its Past and Its Future."

The Chelsea Area Historical Society hosted the meeting which was arranged by Marge Hepburn who sits on both historical society boards.

Breck, a graduate of Michigan State University in forestry and a consultant in sales promotion, has a strong interest in railroad history. He formerly published a magazine on Michigan railroad history, *The Inside Track*, 1970-82. Railroading and small towns are his principal interests, and he has published a book about small town characteristics.

Sam Breck Photo

Chelsea depot, built 1880. Now community center and museum.

"Depots in a little town, especially a hundred years ago, symbolized progress and hope. If a town wasn't served by a canal, or later a railroad, or was not located on a navigable river or large lake, it really didn't stand much of a chance to grow," Breck said.

"If the railroad didn't go through your town--well, look what happened to Waterloo. Waterloo tried very hard to have the Michigan Central come through there or even the Grand Trunk line, now gone, that ran from Pinckney to Jackson. Waterloo is still there but its small.

"In Philadelphia in 1876 there was a marvelous fair. It was the first fair in this country primarily devoted to technology and it showed such things as telephones, elevators and all kinds of farm implements.

"People traveled vast distances by rail to see those wonders. Railroad fever became epidemic, especially in states other than Michigan.

"Here in Michigan we are off from the main stream because we stick up towards the north. The only true transstate routes in Michigan were the one next to us here between Detroit and Chicago and the mainline of Grand Trunk from Port Huron to Flint, Lansing, Battle Creek and Chicago.

"There was a line across the Upper Peninsula that was mainly built by millers in the Twin Cities--Minneapolis and St. Paul. It's a shorter route to the Atlantic seaboard but it never really carried the tonnage that the Michigan Central and the Grand Trunk carried.

"The old Michigan Central Line is no longer a heavy freight route. There are now more passenger than freight trains on this line.

"The Jiffy Mix plant in Chelsea sends a lot of bran to Kelloggs in Battle Creek but what route do they use? It goes from Chelsea east to Detroit, south to Toledo, west to Elkhart, then north to Battle Creek.

"The Grand Trunk route to the north, part of a through route from Chicago to eastern Canadian ports, remains a very heavily traveled route.

"Local boosters across the country sought not only adequate railroad service but overly adequate lines. Iowa was probably the most railroad nuts state in the country. At one time there was no point in Iowa more than eight miles from a railroad.

"Consider growth of railroads. In 1860 the country had 30,000 miles of railroad lines. By 1899 there was 192,000 miles, six times as many. By 1916, the peak of railroading in the United States as far as mileage, there were 247,000 miles.

"In one year alone, 1885-86, when they were building the Ann Arbor Railroad, 21,000 miles of railroad lines were built.

"In 1990 railroads were the largest industry in this country in terms of capitalization. In employment they were second only to agriculture.

"The Pennsylvania Railroad, with headquarters in Philadelphia, was the largest employer in the United States at the turn of the century. It was later surpassed by its best customer, United States Steel.

"In 1916 there were 85,000 depots across the U.S. That's one for about every three miles of rail lines.

"The local depot served as the community's gateway to the world. This is where the people came. This is where people left and this is the building that people remember, located near the commercial center of the town. Sometimes the only paved street in town would lead to the depot.

"Later on--1890, 1895--railroads started to bypass towns. South of here there's a line which comes from Detroit through Adrian and angles off to Indiana. It bypasses towns because it was built late, there was no reason to go right through the center of town.

"Newer lines were often on the outskirts and the depots were there. Near the depot were clustered hotels, cafes, saloons, and livery stables, those busi-

nesses that catered to travelers.

"You see the same thing on I-94 today. At every exit is a gas station, fast food restaurants, and motels.

"Some depots offered eating and sleeping facilities. Durand for example had a huge dining room. In fact that was *the* place in that county to dine."

Breck, glancing out the window, noted, "The signal has turned green out on the railroad. We may have something coming before long."

Sure enough, shortly an eastbound passenger train rumbled by at full speed, whistle blasting and depot vibrating.

"The physical appearance of depots was very important in most areas to make a favorable impression on visitors.

"Many railroad companies had competitions for landscaping depots and awarded substantial prizes. Some depots might have a bed of cannas with whitewashed rocks or they might spell out the name of the city in plants.

"Someone has relandscaped the Albion depot. At Niles, the local garden club has done a beautiful job. The depot at Ypsilanti had a park next to it. They also had a greenhouse there and grew all the flowers used in the dining cars.

"The role of the station agent who occupied the office was a very important one. News came via the telegraph to the depot. In all probability, the agent and the editor of the newspaper were the best informed people in town.

"On election nights this building would undoubtedly be crowded because over that telegraph wire would come news of the election. I think the election of Harding in 1920 was the first election broadcast on radio.

"Depots also functioned as a political center. William Jennings Bryan, it is said, made 600 speeches--probably the same speech--at 600 different locations from the back of a railroad train.

"The agent handled express shipments. There was, of course, the Wells Fargo line and Adams Express. There were several competing companies. Usually, however, they had a franchise.

"Sometimes the size of the building was disproportionate to the size of the community. That was usually an indication somebody of importance in the company lived there or maybe there was a large and very important shipper there.

"The first depots were portable, especially west of Chicago. They would put up a little building. Then as the community grew--and it did because the railroad was there--they would pick up that building and move it further west. Those were not much more than large boxes.

IS IT A RAILROAD DEPOT OR A STATION?

"Somebody asked me what's the difference between a depot and a station," Sam Breck said.

"Today the terms are synonymous but in the railroad business a depot technically is a structure and a station, a named place.

"There still is a station east of Chelsea called 'Four Mile Lake' near the old cement plant and former Honnegger's grain elevator. But there is no railroad structure."

Most of the buildings from here west were built after 1875-80. I'll show you a picture of one built in 1858 but that's pretty early for this part of the country.

"Depots were hot in summer, cold in winter and the cleanliness in any of them was deemed pretty unsatisfactory.

"Many places where two lines crossed had union depots--Durand, Lansing, Trout Lake, and Vicksburg, south of Kalamazoo. Both lines would share the facilities.

"Depots I think you could say achieved a dominance in community life that was never really equalled by cafes, taverns, community centers or bus depots.

"It was the place where men, at least, came and discussed local events and hung around. The waiting room benches weren't occupied solely by people waiting to get on the train.

"The first depots were really barns with a platform on them. Sometimes they were taverns set back a half-block from the tracks. When the train came in the conductor would blow a bugle-like instrument, get off, go in the tavern and sell tickets, come back and get on the train.

"At first the idea of selling tickets in advance didn't occur to them. Finally one British road tried it, it was successful and soon everyone else did the same.

"There was pressure to build more architecturally pleasing depots. Also, the railroads, being such a huge industry, were subject to power and corruption and the railroad needed what we call today 'good PR'.

"Very often depots were built to show that the railroad was a good citizen and it wasn't as bad a company as a lot of people thought it was.

"The basic depot--and this building we are in is pretty much a basic structure--consisted of three parts. One was a suitable place where the railroad could offer its services, a business office. Here they sold tickets and made out bills for freight.

"A second was to offer accommodations for customers, not necessarily clean and comfortable ones, and third, space to store freight.

"As you know, in the south they often had duplicate facilities for black and white passengers, so called Jim Crow stations.

"The depot also had to provide an area the agent would use in controlling trains. A bay window that stuck out allowed the agent to look up and down the tracks and set signals.

"In those days trains ran pretty much by telegraph and a train could not proceed beyond a certain station until the agent at that station had given it clearance.

"Today trains all run by radio. Until five or six years ago near Four Mile Lake there were telegraph poles with lots of wires on them along side the track. About three years ago the wires disappeared. Today the poles are gone. Radio controls train movements.

"Signals along this line are all controlled by somebody sitting at a board in Dearborn and they control switches maybe as far west as Battle Creek.

"A more extreme example is the C. & O. or Chessie Railroad in Michigan that goes from Detroit to Lansing and Grand Rapids. The switches are moved and signals set by somebody in Jacksonville, Florida, and it works perfectly well.

"So the agent's job became more of a clerk and they could cover several stations in an automobile. Gradually

agents were simply phased out.

"The Chelsea depot is a combination type--it combines facilities for freight and passengers. There were larger depots for passengers only with a separate building for freight.

"Sometimes where two lines crossed there was a two-story tower where the operator would control movement of trains safely.

"The monopoly of the railroads was broken about 1920. After that the railroads began to decline not only in number of passengers but also in the amount of freight carried, although there was a big swing up in passengers and freight carried during World War II."

"Improved communications such as radio and all-weather roads also led incidentally to decline of the railroad and the depot. After World War II the railroads dropped what was called L.C.L.

"There wasn't always a UPS (United Parcel Service). Remember in the musical comedy, 'The Music Man', where everybody was all excited when the train arrived and there was a trumpet for the kid and other individual packages. That was L.C.L. service (less than carload lots).

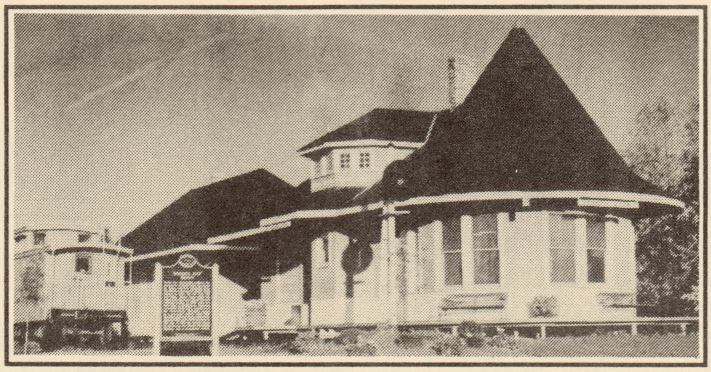
"If you had to send a package you would bring it to the depot and it would go by train.

"Finally rail lines were abandoned. Michigan has had several abandoned. Two lines used to cross in Manchester. Both have been gone since the early 60's. The line that ran from Jackson through Munith and Pinckney to Whitmore Lake also has been gone since the 60's.

"Somebody estimated a few years ago that there were still standing in the U.S. more depots than there were McDonald's restaurants but I doubt its true now. In fact, I think there are a lot more depots standing on this line between Detroit and Chicago than there are on many other lines.

There is a Michigan Central depot still standing in Detroit, Ypsilanti, Ann Arbor, Dexter, Chelsea, Jackson, Albion, Battle Creek, Augusta, Kalamazoo, Lawton, Dowagiac, Niles, Galien, Three Oaks and New Buffalo.

The Michigan Central depot in Detroit is empty. No one knows its fate. They rerouted the railroad in Battle Creek a while ago and it no longer goes by the depot. Dowagiac is used as a community center. The one in Niles has been used in a few Hollywood movies.



Sam Breck Photo

South Lyon's 'Witch's Hat' depot museum, built 1909. Was a union depot of Pere Marquette and Grand Trunk Western Railroads.

Someone in the audience said there is a new Amtrak depot in Dearborn.

Breck then showed slides of depots of various styles and adaptive uses around the country.

"The building at Point of Rocks, Maryland, where the line diverges, left to Baltimore, right to Washington D.C., pretty much started the historic preservation movement in this country."

About twenty-five years ago the railroad wanted to remove it but people acted to save it. It was rehabilitated and used on a postage stamp honoring historic preservation, he said.

Washington D.C. depot. "You probably went here on your high school trip. You go out the front door, look across the lawns and there's the national Capitol."

Canadian Pacific depot and company headquarters in Montreal. "You can see a heavy British influence. Here is an effort to make a big impression on people that this was a big important company."

"It was built about the same time steel began to replace iron as a construction medium, thus allowing spanning of relatively great interior distances.

"The former depot in downtown Indianapolis is now a prime tourist attraction with dozens of little shops, boutiques and three fine restaurants."

"The rehabilitation of the depot reenergized the whole neighborhood, he said. Formerly vacant buildings around it are now splendid office buildings. Near the train shed they pulled in some Pullman cars and made them into a Holiday Inn."

At Saginaw, the large Flint and Pere Marquette depot and headquarters had a boiler house at the side that could keep cars warm in winter. Vacant four or five years, it burned a few months ago. A group would like to rehabilitate it but, because it is in a bad part of town, he fears it will be tough sell.

"The Michigan Central depot in Detroit is really two buildings, a tall office building perched on top of a depot. It was never fully occupied. Four or five floors never had any offices in them."

"The low part is the depot. The waiting room was on one side. Then you passed under the tall building to the rain sheds and tracks.

"The building bears a strong resemblance to Grand Central Station in New York City and, why not, the same man was chief engineer for both.

"The depot is located where it is because the tracks there lead into the tunnel to Windsor. It had to be a little distance from downtown.

"The Grand Trunk depot was along the Detroit River where the Renaissance Center is now. In his old picture the Henkel and Robin Hood Flour Mill was near the depot. Car ferries took passengers and railroad cars across the river there.

Sometimes ethnic makeup of the area dictated architecture. Examples from French Canada were the Quebec City depot and a smaller one south of Montreal on the U.S. border.

"I think that's going to be the last structure on earth--the stone walls must be two-and-a-half feet thick and there's a copper roof."

The San Diego depot was Spanish mission style.

Two comparatively new depots in Cincinnati and Omaha are in art deco style. The architects got the idea of separating incoming and outgoing passengers in the Cincinnati depot. Automobiles came on two levels--picking up someone below, letting off somebody above, just like at Metro.

The Cincinnati depot is going to be used for civic purposes. The Omaha

depot, built about 1936, is vacant.

At the other extreme was the Carsonville depot in Michigan's Thumb. The depot had been removed so the railroad put a roof on a box car and cut a door in the end for a depot.

Britton, Michigan, in Lenawee County had a temporary depot. Its semaphore-like signals are now scarce as radio takes over.

A Bloomfield Hills commuter stop was just an open box or shelter. Those were always on the inbound side, he said.

"Many times in the west railroads were constructed so rapidly there were no towns, so every ten miles or so, the railroad would designate a town, often in alphabetical order. Donald, British Columbia, for example, (shown) was the fourth down the line.

"West of Edmonton, Alberta, you can still trace them out to Harold.

"They were ten miles apart because the railroads figured that's how far a person driving a wagon with a team of horses could go back and forth in a day.

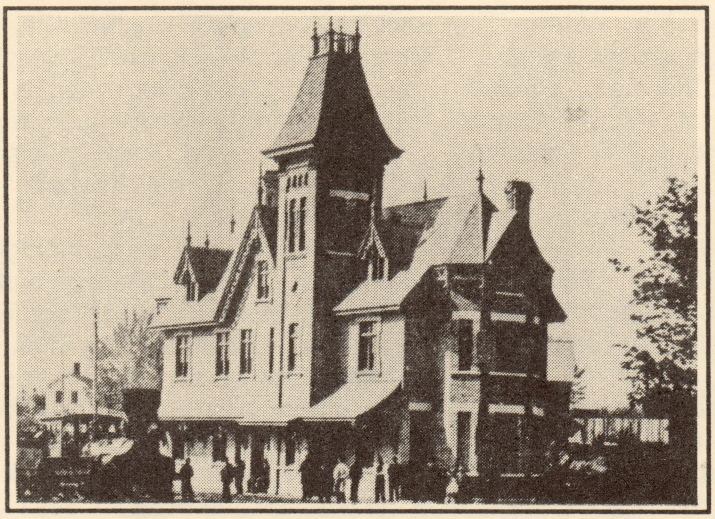
"Sometime pride got the better of a local person and they would build a depot themselves. A North Conway, New Hampshire, citizen took a trip to Russia and came home and had a unique Russian style depot built. A little tourist railroad operates from it now.

Lake Odessa, Michigan, had a tower put on their ordinary depot. The railroad later offered it to the community for a dollar if it could be moved and put in a public place. It was moved to a park.

"There is a very large, disproportionate size depot in Medicine Hat, Alberta, not unlike what you find in Jackson, Michigan. Both of them have offices for the railroad. Both were division points where crews changed--conductors, engineers, firemen, brakemen.

"Normally about every hundred miles you find a division. Jackson isn't a hundred miles from Detroit but there were seven rail lines that came into Jackson at one time and it became a division.

"Jackson depot has been restored just beautifully. Something like seven coats of paint had to be removed from cherry and walnut woodwork. Etched glass windows are all in place.



C.T. Stoner Collection
Michigan Historical Collections

Ypsilanti depot, built 1860. Upper floors removed after damage by train wrecks and lightning. First floor survives.

The Grand Trunk depot in Battle Creek, built about 1912, has overtones of Dutch architecture. A community service agency uses it now. There was a lot of traffic in and out of Battle Creek because of the sanitarium.

The depot in Kalamazoo is intermodal--trains come in one side, buses on the other, both long distance and city buses, and taxicabs. It's a true communication center. It's almost too successful if you go over there on a Friday night when everybody from all the colleges there wants to get on the train at once.

Four or five railroad lines crossed at Durand. There were once as many as 100 passenger trains a day. Next to Detroit, Durand was the busiest passenger station in Michigan.

The depot is big--280 feet long by 60 feet wide, two stories. Someday its going to be a state railroad museum. There are exhibits in it now but not really in chronological sequence, he said.

It's a pleasant drive to Durand. Angle up through Howell, Oak Grove, and Cohoctah to Durand, he suggested.

"A few years ago people in Grand Rapids, Ohio, bought the small archetypical depot in Malinta, Ohio, and moved it to Grand Rapids. When it got there, authorities asked 'where's the permit?' They had no permit so back it went.

"The Dryden depot in Lapeer County is of board and batten construction. Someone told me board and batten was a way you could use lumber that had not been completely cured. You would butt the big boards together and put battens over them so that when the boards contracted you still had a tight wall."

Montague-Whitehall depot, also board and batten, is now a Chamber of Commerce Building.

Elkton in the Thumb, has two freight doors and small passenger space. At one time there must have been a very large shipper.

The Mt. Clemens depot, 1858, is among the earliest existing depots. A group of railroad enthusiasts restored it 10 or 12 years ago. From its platform men and boys went off to Civil War. It's on the line between Detroit and Port Huron.

The Smith Creek depot in Greenfield Village is a companion, about the same style and date.

Coopersville west of Grand Rapids has a large freight area because they shipped a lot of fruit out.

Edmore, in the center of the state, has a two story brick depot. Two lines came together there. Brick depots are usually older than wood. Wood became the primary depot material later.

A two story building is usually an indication of crews and layovers. One in Ontario combines a house in back with a depot in order to entice a man to be an agent in a remote place.

A 1965 interior shot showed a scissor telephone, manual typewriter, all kinds of manual plugs for signals, a perpetual calendar "which probably had been there since ought seven," a regulator clock, and, in 1965, a kerosene lamp.

From that, he said, "you get an idea of what ailed the railroads then. And paper! Oh Lord, paper. The railroads drowned themselves in paper. I imagine the attic in this place was full of it."

Breck called the Chelsea depot an example of a very successful adaptive use. "We are seeing a lot more community uses being made of all the depots that survive now instead of boutiques, restaurants and other commer-

cial adaptations."

Examples of adaptive uses included Mullett Lake and Jonesville, private residences; Owendale in the Thumb, was used as a bank; Gaines in Genesee County is to become a village library; Petoskey, made into offices; Bay City, an antique shop.

The Pere Marquette depot in Petoskey, the Grand Haven depot and the Ann Arbor depot in Howell are community museums.

Sutton's Bay depot is an architect's office, Charlotte's is a Miller's ice cream parlor, Lawton's southwest of Kalamazoo, is a VFW Club, Charlevoix's, a yacht club and Clarkston's, a community theater.

He pointed out a band or hard rock around the bottom of the former Jonesville depot there to protect the bricks from chipping by the baggage carts.

If in the midst of a scene a train comes along at Clarkston, the actors are to hold their positions, let the train go by and start up again.

The rehabilitators of the Ann Arbor depot in Howell wanted to get rid of the gray paint on it with sandblasting or chemical treatment but someone knowledgeable advised them to paint it brick color because the bricks were too soft to withstand the other treatments.

"In a kind of reverse, the former post office in Howell is now the headquarters of a railroad that doesn't even serve that town--the Ann Arbor.

"It now only runs between Toledo and Ann Arbor but they had a lot of employees from the previous organization who lived in Owosso so they decided on an intermediate place. This is a beautifully done restoration inside."

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

FUND RAISING GALA . . .

Continued from page 1.

much more -- a complete list will be included in next month's *Impressions*.

Other features of this fund raising Gala will be door prizes and a raffle. Raffle tickets, will sell for $1 each, 6 for $5, or $10 a dozen. Prizes will be a copy of the *Washtenaw County, An Illustrated History* by Ruth Bordin; a newly created video "The University of Michigan Campus: A Nostalgic Look Back," a 27-minute VHS videocassette created by Nuvo Technical Services; a dinner for two at a top rated local restaurant; and a super-duper prize yet to be determined. If you have any additional suggestions please call 662-9092 and let's talk.

We are looking forward to our move into the Museum in the next few months (cross your fingers). Some of you will be cleaning out basements and attics and others will be moving which usually results in culling out materials from the past.

The Washtenaw County Historical Society will be interested in receiving copies of *old* area high school and University year books, old City Directories, *very old* telephone books, and such once we are "open for business".

The prospect of finally occupying our Museum is exciting. *But* -- before any of this can happen we must install the handicap accessible restroom, the heating and cooling systems, and meet the requirements for a certificate of occupancy.

So do mark your calendar for Friday evening, April 24th. **YOU** can help make our move-in a reality.

Pauline V. Walters
662-9092

ARGUS MEETING APRIL 26

The April WCHS meeting will be held at 2 p.m. Sunday, April 26, instead of the usual third Sunday which is Easter. It will be about "The Argus Camera Company" and will be held in the restored Argus Building.

KAREN'S KORNER

'MOMS' WEARING NEW . . .

Continued from page 1.

tal in submitting a grant application to the *Ann Arbor Area Community Foundation* for video equipment for the Museum. We would like to begin to develop a library of tapes that could be used by Museum visitors or perhaps shown on cable TV.

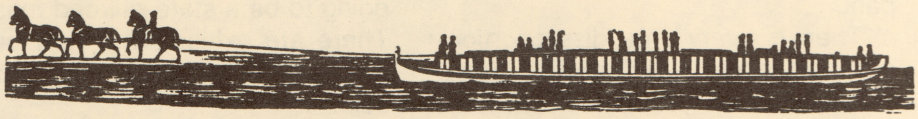
With volunteers and borrowed video equipment she has already video taped several of the Society's programs and completed an oral history interview.

HISTORY BY TELE-VIDEO would be an excellent complement to our planned activities of permanent and changing exhibits within the Museum. We hope we will be successful in finding support for this worthwhile educational project.

Nancy McKinney and Jeanette Carr have put up a small exhibit about money in the lobby of Great Lakes Bancorp (Liberty at Division). Be sure to stop and see it as well as our display case in the lobby of the County Administration Building (the old post office on Main Street).

Doug Kelley has shared part of his collection of political memorabilia about the Presidential candidates who carried Washtenaw County. We look forward to an expanded version of this exhibit sometime after the Museum is open.

Karen O'Neal
665-2242



WCHS 'MONEY' EXHIBIT AT GREAT LAKES BANCORP

Washtenaw County Historical Society's "money" exhibit is now on public display in the main branch of Great Lakes Bancorp, 401 East Liberty, Ann Arbor.

It is a collection of small money-related artifacts from the WCHS collection or on loan from members. It includes a variety of things from toy banks and cash registers to items based on slang terms for money such as an 1830's "bread" pan.

KEMPF HOUSE DOINGS

The third annual U-M Faculty Women's Club Quilt Show will be 1-4 p.m. Saturday and Sunday, March 14-15 at Kempf House, 312 South Division, Ann Arbor.

The Kempf House quilt display continues through March 29. The house is open for tours 1-4 p.m. Saturdays and Sundays and 10-2 p.m. Wednesdays. Brown bag lunch programs resume at noon Wednesday, March 18.

Photos and documents of Ann Arbor's former businesses will be on display April 4 to May 3.

1912 POLITICAL LETTER RECALLS TRAGIC INCIDENT, THE SAD DEMISE OF AN ANN ARBOR CONGRESSMAN

A political letter of 1912 was found in an old law book by Molly Reno, a local attorney, who sent it to WCHS.

On the face of it it might lead one to comment "politics is politics" or "look, you could send a letter all the way from Washington, D.C. to Ann Arbor for just two cents.

But further research into the "who" and "what" of it recalls a tragic incident in Ann Arbor history.

The letter was sent October 25, 1912, by D.A. Edwards, president of the Columbian Correspondence College to "J.W. Dwyer, Ann Arbor, Michigan."

Dwyer was Ann Arbor city attorney and Edwards wanted Dwyer to "cast his anchor" (vote) to return (W.W.) Wedemeyer to Congress.

Edwards wanted to get Wedemeyer on the District of Columbia committee. He felt Congress did not pay enough attention to the district's needs.

Edwards must not have done his homework on Dwyer because Dwyer was a Democrat while Wedemeyer was a Republican.

Wedemeyer was running for his second term in Congress. He was already ont he committees on territories and expenditures of the State Department.

This was the famous three-way election when Teddy Roosevelt ran on the Progressive ticket, drawing votes from William Howard Taft, Republican, and Woodrow Wilson, Democrat.

Hearing of the unexpected opposition to his election as a result of the Progressive movement, Wedemeyer returned from Washington and conducted an extremely hardfought campaign, going without sleep, doing "three men's work," covering every inch of the Second Congressional District of Michigan, speaking in every town.

It was to no avail. He lost to Democrat Samuel W. Beakes, then Ann Arbor city assessor.

Wedemeyer came home from Washington for the holidays but then, instead of staying with his family over Christmas, he went with a committee of congressmen for an inspection trip to Panama where the Panama canal was under construction. (It would be completed in 1914.)

Friday, January 3, the Ann Arbor Daily Times-News large page one banner headline screamed "Congressman W.W. Wedemeyer Dead." Below that it said, "While temporarily insane, he ends life. Jumps overboard while on way home from Panama, is drowned." Ann Arborites were stunned.

Actually, the first day out of New York he had tried to jump overboard. He was put under guard for the rest of the trip. His law partner, Martin J. Cavanaugh, had arranged for him to be treated at Flower Hospital, New York City, when he got back.

That hospital was headed by Dr. Royal S. Copeland, formerly of Dexter, once mayor of Ann Arbor, later a U.S. Senator and a friend of Wedemeyer's.

January 4th flags flew at half-mast in Ann Arbor. Later a memorial service was held in University hall and another in the House of Representatives in Washington.

"His defeat...was a bitter disappointment to him and he brooded over it a great deal," it was reported. Twice before he was elected he aspired to run but was persuaded to let someone else run from another county in the district.

"He was an orator of the old school, bland, eloquent and persuasive." Often he had spoken in support of others running for office including Governor Hazen S. Pingree.

Beakes, who defeated Wedemeyer for Congress, had earlier published *Past and Present of Washtenaw County*, in 1906, now one of the standard reference works in local history. The newspaper copied Beakes' biography of Wedemeyer word for word.

Beakes, too, was stunned by his opponent's death. He said he had known him since they were boys and they had been warm personal friends.

Another friend of Wedemeyer's was his college roommate, Robert Clair Campbell (known as Clair or R.C.) when they attended the University of Michigan. Clair was the father of George and Mary Campbell who owned Ann Arbor's Cobblestone Farm before the city bought it.

MORE PIONEER NAMES FROM BURNS PARK LOG CABIN

The roll of pioneers whose names were inscribed on logs in the former Burns Park log cabin, begun in the January issue, continues. The cabin was built in 1898 on what was then Washtenaw County Fairgrounds. It was razed in 1956 but parts of the logs with names on them were stored.

Not previously mentioned were two planks, one saying "First Married in Ann Arbor, Mr. and Mrs. George W. Allen (no date)" and "First born in Ann Arbor, John S. Nowland, Ann Arbor, 18__ (illegible, claimed to be 1826)."

George W. Allen who does not seem to be related to Ann Arbor Founder John Allen, was a first purchaser of land in then Ann Arbor township, Section 30. Today West Huron Street cuts through the middle of his "80" just east of the fork with Dexter Avenue.

We do not know his wife's name. The 1881 Washtenaw County History says George W. and J. Allen purchased the east half of the northeast quarter of Section 30. George served on the county's first petit jury.

As to the first white child born in Ann Arbor, there are rival claims. Elisha Walker Rumsey Smith was born November 27, 1825. He was so named at the request of Ann Arbor co-founder Rumsey who promised the child a village lot.

Alas the baby died in April 1827. A few months later on September 5, Ann Arbor's co-founder Rumsey died too.

According to a letter from a local pioneer in the *Ann Arbor Register*, April 30, 1885, found by Russell Bidlack there is yet an earlier claim.

The pioneer, John Geddes, wrote that George Rash's wife gave birth January 29, 1825, to a daughter named Mary. Her father had bought the northeast quarter of Section 25, Ann Arbor township, on June 17, 1824, and brought his family to settle there (on Dixboro Road).

Geddes points out that "town" can mean a city, a village or a township. Thus Mary Rash would have been first born in the township. If one limited it to the village, the Smith infant seems to have been first.

Mary Rash also was short lived. She died on March 16, 1831.

One wonders if, at some later date when the short-lived Smith and Rash babies were probably long forgotten, someone, perhaps at a 50th anniversary celebration in Ann Arbor or a Pioneer Society meeting asked who present had been born in Ann Arbor and when, it turned out that John Nowland had been born earliest.

With the first married Allens and John Nowland there were a total of 196 names on the logs.

Parker, Elisha B. & Franklin L., Salem, 1829
Parshall, J.J., Ann Arbor, 1845
Peters, George W. & Amelia, Scio, 1826
Phelps, Norman A., Scio, 1832
Polhemus, Cornelius & Jacob A., Ann Arbor, 1832

Quirk, Daniel Lace, Ypsilanti, 1838

Rayer, Christian, Ann Arbor, 1836
Reed, John, Ypsilanti, 1838
Rinsey, David, Ann Arbor, 1854

Sawyer, Andrew J., Chelsea, 1857
Schaeffer, John Jacob, Ann Arbor, 1837
Schmid, Rev. Frederick, Ann Arbor, 1833
Seabolt, Moses, Ann Arbor, 1837
Sessions, J.Q.A., Northfield, 1834
Sessions, George & Eunice, Northfield 1834
Smith, Dr. R.S., Ann Arbor, 1851
Smith, Willard B., Ann Arbor, 1851
Starkweather, Mr. & Mrs. J., Ypsilanti, 1847
Stevens, William N., Northfield, 1847
Stone, Charles & Nettie, Ypsilanti, 1834
Stumpenhusen, Mr. & Mrs. Henry, Ypsilanti, 1836
Sutherland, Nelson, Pittsfield, 1840
Swathel, John T., Ann Arbor, 1840

(To be continued.)

HISTORY HAPPENINGS INVOLVE: 20TH ANNIVERSARY, CRAFTS, UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

Chelsea Historical Society: 7:30 p.m. second Monday at Depot, North Main at railroad tracks.

Dexter Society: 8 p.m. first Thursday at museum, 3443 Inverness. The 19th annual craft fair will be 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Saturday, March 21, at Dexter High School on Baker Road, featuring 55-60 craft persons demonstrating and selling their work.

Manchester Society: 7:30 p.m. third Tuesday at Blacksmith Shop, 324 East Main.

Milan Society: 7:30 p.m. third Wednesday at Hack House, 775 County Street. WCHS President Pauline Walters presented an anniversary certificate to the society at their 20th anniversary celebration in February.

Pittsfield Society: 2 p.m. first Sunday at Pittsfield Town Hall, State and Ellsworth Roads.

Salem Society: Two historic houses in the area will be the topic at the annual meeting and potluck dinner at 6:30 p.m. Thursday, March 26, at the former Congregational Church on Dickerson Street in Salem. Edna Terry will tell about her home which was once used on the underground railroad and Billy Kruse will tell about an unusual stone structure in Salem where he was born.

Saline Society: 7 p.m. third Wednesday at Senior Center, 7605 North Maple Road.

Webster Society: 7:45 p.m. second Monday. Peggy Haines, Washtenaw County Clerk/Register of Deeds will talk about "Dating This Old House" March 9. Meeting at home of Cathy Cooper-Friesen, 7640 North Zeeb Road.

April 13 the socity will visit South Lyon Historical Society's one-room school house and depot.

Ypsilanti Society: Museum, 220 North Huron, open 2-4 p.m. Thursday, Saturday and Sunday. Archives open 9 a.m.-noon weekdays.

HOW TO JOIN WCHS

Send name, address and phone number with check or money order payable to Washtenaw County Historical Society to:

WCHS Membership
2200 Fuller Road, 1202 B
Ann Arbor, MI 48105-2307

Annual dues are $10, individual; $18 a couple. Senior individual (60), $8; senior couple, $14. Sustaining dues, $50, commercial, $25, and student, $5. Only one of a couple need be 60.

CERTIFICATE OFFERED

Hand-lettered certificates are offered free of charge, framed if desired, by WCHS to organizations for milestone anniversaries. Information: 663-8826.

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WASHTENAW COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

"ST. JOSEPH HOSPITAL HISTORY"

2 P.M. Sunday
MARCH 15, 1992

Catherine McAuley Health Center
Education Building
5301 East Huron River Drive

WASHTENAW COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
2200 Fuller Road, 1202 B
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48105-2307

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